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HĀN KOOONG TSEW,

OR

THE SORROWS OF HĀN:

A CHINESE TRAGEDY.

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A CHINESE TRAGEDY.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL, WITH NOTES.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Drama was selected from the "Hundred Plays of Yuen," which has already supplied to Europe two specimens of the Chinese stage—the first, called the "Orphan of Chaou," translated by Père Premare, and the second entitled an "Heir in Old Age," by the author of the present version. The "Sorrows of Hān" is strictly historical, and relates to one of the most interesting periods of the Chinese annals, when the growing effeminacy of the court, and consequent weakness of the government, emboldened the Tartars in their aggressions, and first gave rise to the temporising and impolitic system of propitiating those barbarians by tribute, which long after produced the downfall of the empire, and the establishment of the Mongol dominion.

The moral of the piece is evidently to expose the evil consequences of luxury, effeminacy, and supineness in the sovereign,

" When love was all an easy monarch's care,
Seldom at council—never in a war."

The hero, or rather the chief personage, of the drama, came to the

throne very near the beginning of the Christian era, about B.C. 42. The fate of the Lady Chaoukeun is a favorite incident in history, of which painters, poets, and romancers, frequently avail themselves : her “ Verdant Tomb ” is said to exist at the present day, and to remain green all the year round, while the vegetation of the desert in which it stands is parched by the summer sun.

In selecting this single specimen from among so many, the translator was influenced by the consideration of its remarkable accordance with our own canons of criticism. The Chinese themselves make no regular classification of comedy and tragedy ; but we are quite at liberty to give the latter title to a play, which so completely answers to the European definition. The unity of action is complete, and the unities of time and place much less violated than they frequently are on our own stage. The grandeur and gravity of the subject, the rank and dignity of the personages, the tragical catastrophe, and the strict award of poetical justice, might satisfy the most rigid admirer of Grecian rules. The translator has thought it necessary to adhere to the original in distinguishing by name the first act (or Proëm) from the four which follow it : but the distinction is purely nominal, and the piece consists, to all intents and purposes, of *five* acts. It is remarkable, that this peculiar division holds true with regard to a large number of the “ Hundred Plays of Yuen.”

The reader will doubtless be struck by the apparent shortness of the drama which is here presented to him : but the original is eked out, in common with all Chinese plays, by an irregular operatic species of song, which the principal character occasionally chaunts forth in unison with a louder or a softer accompaniment of music, as may best suit the sentiment or action of the moment. Some passages have been embodied in

our version: but the translator did not give *all*, for the same reasons that prompted Père Premare to give *none*—“they are full of allusions to things unfamiliar to us, and figures of speech very difficult for us to observe.”—They are frequently, moreover, mere repetitions or amplifications of the prose parts; and being intended more for the ear than for the eye, are rather adapted to the stage than to the closet.*

His judgment may perhaps be swayed by partiality towards the subject of his own labours; but the translator cannot help thinking the plot and incidents of the “Sorrows of Hän” superior to those of the “Orphan of Chaou”—though the genius of Voltaire contrived to make the last the groundwork of an excellent French tragedy. Far is he, however, from entertaining the presumptuous expectation that a destiny of equal splendour awaits the present drama: and he will be quite satisfied if the reader has patience to read it to the end, and then pronounces it to be a somewhat curious sample of a very foreign literature. The original text of the Proëm, or introductory act, is added to the translation.

The following list of Chinese Play-Books may perhaps be useful to students of the language:

Chang seng teën (258 . 8812 . 10141 †)	. . . . .	4 volumes.
Chue peh kew (1469 . 8526 . 8295)	. . . . .	24 volumes.
Chun tang me (1638 . 9896 . 7558)	. . . . .	4 volumes.
Foong kew hwong (2781 . 6287 . 4380)	. . . . .	16 volumes.

* For some observations on this subject, see Treatise on Chinese Poetry, Part II.

† The numbers refer to the characters in Dr. Morrison’s Chinese and English Dictionary, arranged alphabetically.

Han heang ting (3192 . 3511 . 10222)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Hoo kow yu seng (4078 . 6514 . 12405 . 8812)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Hoong low moong chuen ke (4168 . 7343 . 7840 . 1498 . 5240)	. . . .	6 volumes.
Hwang ho low (4398 . 4039 . 7343)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Hwuy chin ke (4562 . 943 . 5189)	. . . .	6 volumes.
Keaou twan yuen (5565 . 11470 . 12536)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Kew too (6263 . 10845)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Kew chung keo (6263 . 1709 . 6210)	. . . .	9 volumes.
Moòng le yuen (7840 . 12559)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Nae ho teën (7878 . 3993 . 10095)	. . . .	10 volumes.
Pa mei too (8129 . 7658 . 10344)	. . . .	10 volumes.
Pe muh yu (8263 . 7803 . 12413)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Peih yu sze (8517 . 12560 . 9666)	. . . .	6 volumes.
Se keang chuh kea (8840 . 5500 . 1613 . 5394)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Se seang (8840 . 8859)	. . . .	6 volumes.
Shan hoo keue (9096 . 4100 . 6126)	. . . .	2 volumes.
She shen ke (9164 . 9210 . 5189)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Shih lew ke (9239 . 7194 . 5189)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Shwong tsuy yuen (9427 . 11197 . 12550)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Shwong chung meaou (9427 . 1669 . 7592)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Teng wong keh (9900 . 11618 . 6450)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Taou hwa shen (9916 . 4199 . 9210)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Yih tseën yuen (12175 . 10726 . 12559)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Yö foo hoong shan (12378 . 2378 . 4168 . 9096)	. . . .	6 volumes.
Yu shwuy yuen (12413 . 9430 . 12559)	. . . .	4 volumes.
Yuen haou mei (12504 . 8259 . 7636)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Yu saou tow (12560 . 8829 . 10366)	. . . .	2 volumes.
Yuen jin pih chung keo (12504 . 4693 . 8526 . 1709 . 6210)	. . . .	40 volumes.

HĀN KOOONG TSEW.

B

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

YUENTE	.	<i>Emperor of China (of the Dynasty Hān).</i>
HANCHENYU	.	<i>K'han of the Tartars.</i>
MAOYENSHOW	.	<i>A worthless Minister of the Emperor.</i>
SHANGSHOO (<i>a title</i>)	.	<i>President of the Imperial Council.</i>
CHANGSHE (<i>ditto</i>)	.	<i>Officer in waiting.</i>
FANSHE (<i>ditto</i>)	.	<i>Envoy of the K'han.</i>
CHAOUKEUN	.	<i>Lady, raised to be Princess of Hān.</i>

Tartar soldiers, Female attendants, Eunuchs, &c.

The Scene lies in the Tartar Camp, on the Frontiers ; and in the Palace of Hān.

HĀN KOOONG TSEW,

OR

THE SORROWS OF HĀN.*

PROEM.

Enter K'HAN† OF THE TARTARS, reciting four verses.

K'HAN "The autumnal gale blows wildly through the grass, amidst our woollen tents,
And the moon of night, shining on the rude huts, hears the lament of the mournful pipe :
The countless hosts, with their bended bows, obey me as their leader ;
Our tribes are the distinguished friends of the family of Hān."

I am Hanchenyu, the old inhabitant of the sandy waste ; the sole ruler of the northern regions. The wild chace is our trade ; battle and conquest our chief occupation. The Emperor Wunwong retired before our eastern tribes ; the state Wei ‡ trembled at us, and sued for our friendship. The ancient title of our chiefs has in the course of time been changed to that which I now bear. When the two races of Tsin and Hān contended in battle, and filled the empire with tumult, our tribes were in full power : numberless was the host of armed warriors, with their bended bows. For seven days my ancestor hemmed in with his forces the Emperor Kaoute ; until, by the contrivance of the minister, a treaty

* Literally, " Autumn in the palace of Hān ;" but in Chinese, Autumn is emblematic of Sorrow, as Spring is of Joy, and may therefore be rendered by what it represents.

† In Chinese, Ko-han.

‡ One of the *San Kwō*, or " Three States," anciently situated near the Yellow River in the present Shanse province.

was concluded, and the Princesses of China were yielded in marriage to our K'hans.* Since the time of Hoeyte and the Empress Leuhow,† each successive generation has adhered to the established rule, and sought our alliance with its daughters. In the reign of the late Emperor Seuente, my brothers contended with myself for the rule of our nation, and its power was weakened until the tribes elected me as their chief. I am a real descendant of the empire of Hān.—I command a hundred thousand armed warriors. We have moved to the south, and approached the border, claiming an alliance with the Imperial race. Yesterday, I despatched an envoy with tributary presents to demand a princess in alliance; but know not if the Emperor will ratify the engagement with the customary oaths. The fineness of the season has drawn away our chiefs on a hunting excursion amidst the sandy steppes. May they meet with success, for we Tartars have no fields—our bows and arrows are our sole means of subsistence.

(*Exit.*)

Enter MINISTER OF HĀN, reciting verses.

MINISTER.—“ Let a man have the heart of a kite, and the talons of an eagle,
Let him deceive his superiors, and oppress those below him ;
Let him enlist flattery, insinuation, profligacy, and avarice on his side,
And he will find them a lasting assistance through life.”

I am no other than Maouyenshow, a minister of the sovereign of Hān. By a hundred arts of specious flattery and address I have deceived the Emperor, until he places his whole delight in me alone. My words he listens to; and he follows my counsel. Within the precincts of the palace, as without them, who is there but bows before me—who is there but trembles at my approach? But observe the chief art which I have learned: it is this; to persuade the Emperor to keep aloof from his wise counsellors, and seek all his pleasures amidst the women of his palace. Thus it is that I strengthen my power and greatness. But, in the midst of my lucubrations, here comes the Emperor.

Enter EMPEROR YUENTE attended by Eunuchs and women.

EMPEROR. (*Recites verses.*)—

“ During the ten generations that have succeeded our acquisition of empire,

* See Memoir concerning the Chinese, vol. i. p. 7. Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society.

† The mother of Hoeyte, a bold and able woman, who ruled for her son, the second Emperor of Hān.

My race has alone possessed the four hundred districts of the world :
 Long have the frontiers been bound in tranquillity by the ties of mutual oaths,
 And our pillow has been undisturbed by grief or anxiety."

Behold in us the Emperor Yuente, of the race of Hān. Our ancestor Kaoute emerged from a private station, and raised his family by extinguishing the dynasty of Tsin, and slaughtering their race. Ten generations have passed away since he left this inheritance to us. The four boundaries of the empire have been tranquil : the eight regions at rest ! But not through our personal merits ; we have wholly depended on the exertions of our civil and military rulers. On the demise of our late father, the female inmates of the palace were all dispersed, and our haram * is now solitary and untenanted ; but how shall this be endured !

MIN.—Consider, sir, that even the thriving husbandman may desire to change his partner ; then, why not your Majesty, whose title is the Son of Heaven, whose possessions are the whole world ! May I advise, that commissioners be despatched to search throughout the empire for all, of whatever rank, that is most beautiful, between the ages of fifteen and twenty, for the peopling of the inner palace.

EMP.—You say well. We appoint you at once our minister of selection, and will invest you with a written authority. Search diligently through our realms ; and when you have selected the most worthy, let us be provided with portraits of each, as a means of fixing our choice. By the merits of your services, you may supply us with an occasion of rewarding you on your return.

(*Exeunt.*)

* *Nuykoong.*

ACT I.

Enter MINISTER.

MIN. (*Repeats verses.*)—

“The huge ingots of yellow gold I appropriate to myself,
I heed not the seas of blood which flow by perverting the laws :
During life I am determined to have abundance of riches ;
What care I for the curses of mankind after my death ?”

Having received the Emperor's commission to search far and wide for the most beautiful damsels, I have fixed upon ninety-nine. Their families were glad to invite my selection by rich gifts, and the treasure that I have amassed is not small. On arriving yesterday at a district pertaining to Chingtoo city, I met with a maiden, daughter of one Wongchang. The brightness of her charms was piercing as an arrow!* She was perfectly beautiful—and doubtless unparalleled in the whole empire. But, unfortunately, her father is a cultivator of the land, not possessed of much wealth. When I insisted on a hundred ounces of gold to secure her being the chief object of the imperial choice, they first pleaded their poverty,—and then, relying on her extraordinary beauty, rejected my offers altogether. I therefore left them.—(*Considers awhile.*) But no!—I have a better plan. (*He knits his brows and matures his scheme.*) I will disfigure her portrait in such manner, that when it reaches the Emperor it shall secure her being doomed to neglected seclusion.—Thus I shall contrive to make her unhappy for life—Base is the man who delights not in revenge!

Night.—Enter the LADY CHAOUKEUN, with two female attendants.

CHAOU. (*Recites verses.*)—

"Though raised to be an inhabitant of the imperial dwelling,
I have long been here without the good fortune to see my prince :
This beautiful night must I pass in lonely solitude,
With no companion but my lute to solace my retirement."

I am a native of Chingtoo city; and my father's occupation is husbandry. My mother dreamed on the day I was born that the light of the moon shone on her

* Seng tih kwong tsae shay jin.

bosom, but was soon cast low to the earth.* I was just eighteen years of age when chosen as an inhabitant of the imperial palace; but the minister Maouyenshow, disappointed in the treasure which he demanded on my account, disfigured my portrait in such manner as to keep me out of the Emperor's presence; and I now live in neglected solitude. While at home, I learned a little music, and could play a few airs on the lute. Thus sorrowing in the stillness of midnight, let me practise one of my songs to dispel my griefs. (*Begins to play on the lute.*†)

Enter EMPEROR, attended by a Eunuch carrying a light.

EMPEROR.—Since the beauties were selected to grace our palace, we have not yet discovered a worthy object on whom to fix our preference. Vexed and disappointed, we have passed this day of leisure roaming in search of her who may be destined for our imperial choice. (*Hears the lute.*) Is not that some lady's lute?

ATTENDANT.—It is. I hasten to advise her of your Majesty's approach.

EMP.—No, hold! Keeper of the yellow gate, discover to what part of our palace that lady pertains; and bid her approach our presence: but beware lest you alarm her.

ATTEND.—(*Approaches in the direction of the sound, and speaks.*) What lady plays there? The Emperor comes: approach to meet him. (*Lady advances.*)

EMP.—Keeper of the yellow gate, see that the light burns brightly within your gauze † lamp, and hold it nearer to us.

LADY.—(*Approaching.*) Had your handmaid but known it was your Majesty, she would have been less tardy; forgive, then, this delay!

EMP.—Truly this is a very perfect beauty! From what quarter come such superior charms?

LADY.—My name is Chaoukeun: my father cultivates at Chingtoo the fields which he has derived from his family.—Born in an humble station, I am ignorant of the manners that befit a palace.

EMP.—But with such uncommon attractions what chance has kept you from our sight?

LADY.—When I was chosen by the minister Maouyenshow, he demanded of my father an amount of treasure which our poverty could not supply: he there-

* Boding a short but fatal distinction to her offspring.

† The notes within brackets are the same in the original version.

‡ Instead of glass, to defend it from the wind.

fore disfigured my portrait, by representing a scar under the eyes, and caused me to be consigned to seclusion and neglect.

EMP.—Keeper of the yellow gate, bring us that picture, that we may view it. (*Sees the picture.*) “ Ah, how has he dimmed the purity of the gem, bright as the waves in autumn ! ”* (*To the attendant.*) Transmit our pleasure to the officer of the guard to behead Maouyenshow, and report to us his execution.

LADY.—My parents, Sir, are subject to the tax† in our native district. Let me entreat your Majesty to remit their contributions and extend favour towards them !

EMP.—That shall readily be done. Approach and hear our imperial pleasure —We create you a Princess of our palace.

LADY.—How unworthy is your handmaid of such gracious distinction ! (*goes through the form of returning thanks.*) Early to-morrow I attend your Majesty’s commands in this place.—The Emperor is gone : let the attendants close the doors :—I will retire to rest. (*Exit.*)

* The passages with inverted commas are selected from the musical portion.

† The principal taxes in China are, the land-tax, customs, salt monopoly, and personal service ; which last is the source of much oppression to the lowest orders, who have nothing but their labour to contribute.

ACT II.

Enter K'HAN OF THE TARTARS at the head of his Tribes.

K'HAN.—I lately sent an envoy to the Sovereign of Hān, with the demand of a princess in marriage: but the Emperor has returned a refusal, under the plea that the princess is yet too young. This answer gives me great trouble.—Had he not plenty of ladies in his palace, of whom he might have sent me one? The difference was of little consequence.* Let me recall my envoy with all speed, for I must invade the south with our forces.—And yet I am unwilling to break a truce of so many years standing! We must see how matters turn out, and be guided by the event.

Enter MINISTER OF HĀN.

MIN. The severity with which I extorted money, in the selection of beauties for the palace, led me to disfigure the picture of Chaoukeun, and consign her thereby to neglected seclusion. But the Emperor fell in with her, obtained from her the truth, and condemned me to lose my head. I contrived to make my escape—though I have now no home to receive me. I will take this true portrait of Chaoukeun, and show it to the Tartar K'han, persuading him to demand her from the Emperor, who will no doubt be obliged to yield her up. A long journey has brought me to this spot, and from the troops of men and horses I conclude I have reached the Tartar camp.—(*Addresses himself to somebody*) Leader, inform king Hanchenyu, that a great minister of the empire of Hān is come to wait on him.

K'HAN. (*On being informed.*)—Command him to approach. (*Seeing Maou-yenshow*) What person are you?

MIN.—I am a minister of Hān. In the western palace of the Emperor is a lady, named Chaoukeun, of rare and surpassing charms. When your envoy, great king, came to demand a princess, this lady would have answered the summons; but the Emperor of Hān could not bring himself to part with her, and refused to yield her up. I repeatedly renewed my bitter reproaches, and asked how he could bear, for the sake of a woman's beauty, to implicate the welfare of two nations. For this the Emperor would have beheaded me; and I therefore

* The honour of the imperial alliance being the chief object.

escaped with the portrait of the lady, which I present, great king, to yourself. Should you send away an envoy with the picture to demand her, she must certainly be delivered up. Here is the portrait. (*Hands it up.*)

K'HAN.—Whence could so beautiful a female have appeared in the world ! If I can only obtain her, my wishes are complete. Immediately shall an envoy be despatched, and my ministers prepare a letter to the Emperor of Hān, demanding her in marriage as the condition of peace. Should he refuse, I will presently invade the south : his hills and rivers shall be exposed to ravage. Our warriors will commence by hunting, as they proceed on their way ; and thus gradually entering the frontiers, I shall be ready to act as may best suit the occasion.

(*Exit.*)

Palace of Hān. Enter LADY, attended by females.

PRIN.—A long period has elapsed since I had to thank his Majesty for his choice. The Emperor's fondness for me is so great, that he has long neglected to hold a court. I hear he is now gone to the hall of audience, and will therefore ornament myself at my toilet,* and be adorned and prepared to wait on him at his return. (*Stands opposite to a mirror.†*)

Enter EMPEROR.

EMP.—Since we first met with Chaoukeun, in the western palace, we have been as it were deranged and intoxicated : a long interval has elapsed since we held a court ; and on entering the hall of audience this day, we waited not until the assembly had dispersed, but returned hither to obtain a sight of her. (*Perceiving the princess.*) Let us not alarm her, but observe in secret what she is doing. (*Comes close behind, and looks over her.*) “Reflected in that round mirror, she resembles the Lady in the Moon.”‡

* Chwangtae.

† The proper Chinese mirror is of metal, and circular.—Vide infra.

‡ The passages marked with inverted commas are retained from the operatic portion of the drama, or that which is *sung*. Changngo, the goddess of the Moon, gives her name to the finely curved eyebrows (Ngomei) of the Chinese ladies, which are compared to the lunar crescent when only a day or two old.

Enter PRESIDENT, and an officer in waiting.

PRESIDENT. (*Recites verses.*)—

“Ministers should devote themselves to the regulation of the empire;

They should be occupied with public cares in the hall of government:

But they do nought but attend at the banquets in the palace:

When have they employed a single day in the service of their prince?”

This day, when the audience was concluded, an envoy arrived from the Tartars to demand Chaoukeun in marriage, as the only condition of peace. It is my duty to report this to his Majesty, who has retired to his western palace. Here I must enter. (*Perceiving the Emperor.*) I report to your Majesty that Han-chenyu, the leader of the northern foreigners, sends an envoy to declare that Maouyenshow has presented to him the portrait of the princess, and that he demands her in marriage as the only condition of peace. If refused, he will invade the south with a great power, and our rivers and hills will be exposed to rapine.

EMP.—In vain do we maintain and send forth armies: vain are the crowds of civil and military officers about our palace! Which of them will drive back for us these foreign troops? They are all afraid of the Tartar swords and arrows! But if they cannot exert themselves to expel the barbarians, why call for the princess to propitiate them?

PRESID.—The foreigners say that through your Majesty’s devoted fondness for the princess, the affairs of your empire are falling into ruin. They declare that if the government does not yield her up, they will put their army in motion, and subdue the country. Your servant reflects, that Chow-wong,* who lost his empire and life entirely through his blind devotion to Täkee, is a fit example to warn your Majesty. Our army is weak, and needs the talents of a fit general. Should we oppose the Tartars, and be defeated, what will remain to us? Let your Majesty give up your fondness for the princess, to save your people.

OFF.—The envoy waits without for an audience.

EMP.—Well; command that he approach us.

* *Chow-wong* was the last of the Shang dynasty, and infamous by his debaucheries and cruelties, in concert with his empress *Täkee*, the Theodora of the Chinese. When invaded by Woowong, (who deprived him of empire,) he mounted a funeral pile in all his splendour, and burned himself to death like Sardanapalus.

Enter Envoy.

Envoy.—Hanchenyu, K'han of the Tartars, sends me, his minister, to state before the great Sovereign of Hān, that the northern tribes and the southern empire have long been bound in peace by mutual alliances; but that envoys being twice sent to demand a princess, his requisitions have been refused. The late minister, Maouyenshow, took with him the portrait of a beautiful lady, and presented it to the K'han, who now sends me, his envoy, on purpose to demand the Lady Chaoukeun, and no other, as the only condition of peace between the two nations. Should your Majesty refuse, the K'han has a countless army of brave warriors, and will forthwith invade the south to try the chances of war. I trust your Majesty will not err in your decision.

EMP.—The envoy may retire to repose himself in his lodging. (*Exit the envoy.*) Let our civil and military officers consult, and report to us the best mode of causing the foreign troops to retire, without yielding up the princess to propitiate them. They take advantage of the compliant softness of her temper. Were the Empress Leuhow * alive—let her utter a word,—which of them would dare to be of a different opinion?—It would seem that, for the future, instead of men for ministers, we need only have fair women to keep our empire in peace!

PRIN.—In return for your Majesty's bounties, it is your handmaid's duty to brave death to serve you. I can cheerfully enter into this foreign alliance, for the sake of producing peace, and shall † leave behind me a name still green in history.—But my affection for your Majesty, how am I to lay aside!

EMP.—Alas, I † know too well that I can do no more than yourself!

PRESID.—I entreat your Majesty to sacrifice your love, and think of the security of your Dynasty. § Hasten, Sir, to send the princess on her way!

EMP.—Let her this day advance a stage on her journey, and be presented to the envoy.—To-morrow we will repair as far as the bridge of Pāhling, and give her a parting feast.

PRESID.—Alas! Sir, this may not be! It will draw on us the contempt of these barbarians.

EMP.—We have complied with all our minister's propositions—shall they

* See note, p. 4.

† Lew ming tsing she.

‡ The Imperial pronoun, “Tchin,” *We*, is with very good taste supplied by *I* in these impassioned passages.

§ Literally, “The gods of the land and grain,” who grant their territory to a particular family.

not, then, accede to ours? Be it as it may, we will witness her departure—and then return home to hate the traitor Maouyenshow!

PRESID.—Unwillingly we advise that the princess be sacrificed for the sake of peace: but the envoy is instructed to insist upon her alone—and from ancient times, how often hath the nation suffered for a woman's beauty!

PRIN.—Though I go into exile for the nation's good, yet ill can I bear to part from your Majesty!

(*Exeunt.*)

ACT III.

Enter Envoy, escorting the Princess, with a band of music.

PRIN.—Thus was I, in spite of the treachery of Maouyenshow, who disfigured my portrait, seen and exalted by his Majesty: but the traitor presented a truer likeness to the Tartar king, who comes at the head of an army to demand me, with a threat of seizing the country. There is no remedy—I must be yielded up to propitiate the invaders! How shall I bear the rigours—the winds and frosts of that foreign land! It has been said of old, that “surpassing beauty* is often coupled with an unhappy fate.” Let me grieve, then, without entertaining fruitless resentment at the effects of my own attractions.

Enter Emperor, attended by his several officers.

EMP.—This day we take leave of the princess at Pāhling bridge! (*To his ministers*) Can ye not yet devise a way to send out these foreign troops, without yielding up the princess for the sake of peace? (*Descends from his horse, and appears to grieve with Chaoukeun*) Let our attendants delay awhile, till we have conferred the parting cup.

Envoy.—Lady, let us urge you to proceed on your way—the sky darkens, and night is coming on.

PRIN.—Alas! when shall I again behold your Majesty? I will take off my robes of distinction and leave them behind me. To-day in the palace of Hān—to-morrow I shall be espoused to a stranger. I cease to wear these splendid vestments—they shall no longer adorn my beauty in the eyes of men!

Envoy.—Again let us urge you, princess, to depart; we have delayed but too long already!

EMP.—'Tis done!—Princess, when you are gone, let your thoughts forbear to dwell with sorrow and resentment upon us! (*They part.*)—And am I the great Monarch of the line of Hān? †

* This is a very old sentiment, out of China;

“ Sed vetat optari faciem Lucretia qualem
Ipsa habuit: cuperet Rutilæ Virginia gibbum
Accipere, atque suam Rutilæ dare.”

† “ Lie there, thou shadow of an Emperor!”—Mark Anthony.

PRESID.—Let your Majesty cease to dwell with such grief upon this subject!

EMP.—“She is gone! In vain have we maintained those armed heroes on the frontier.* Mention but swords and spears, and they tremble at their hearts like a young deer. The princess has this day performed what belonged to themselves: and yet do they affect the semblance of men!”

PRESID.—Your Majesty is entreated to return to the palace: dwell not so bitterly, Sir, on her memory: allow her to depart!

EMP.—“Did I not think of her, I had a heart of iron—a heart of iron! The tears of my grief stream in a thousand channels. This evening shall her likeness be suspended in the palace, where I will sacrifice to it—and tapers with their silvery light shall illuminate her chamber.”

PRESID.—Let your Majesty return to the palace—the princess is already far distant!
(*Exeunt.*)

The Tartar Camp. Enter K'HAN at the head of his tribes, leading in the Princess.

K'HAN.—The Emperor of Hān having now, in observance of old treaties, yielded up to me the Lady Chaoukeun in marriage, I take her as my rightful queen. The two nations shall enjoy the benefits of peace. (*To his generals*) Leaders, transmit my commands to the army to strike our encampment, and proceed to the north. (*They march.*)

The River Amoor.† Tartar army on its march.

PRIN.—What place is this?

ENVY.—It is the River of the Black Dragon, the frontier of the Tartar territories and those of China. This southern shore is the Emperor's: on the northern side commences our Tartar dominion.

PRIN.—(*To the K'han*) Great King, I take a cup of wine, and pour a libation towards the south—my last farewell to the Emperor, (*pours the libation.*) Em-

* It may be observed, that the great wall is never once expressly mentioned through this drama. The expression used is *Pēensh*, the border, or frontier. The wall had existed 200 years at this time, but the real frontier was beyond it.

† Or Saghalien, which falls into the sea of Ochotak.

peror of Hān, this life * is finished.—I await thee in the next! (*Throws herself into the river.*)

The K'HAN, in great consternation, endeavours to save her, but in vain.

K'HAN.—Alas! Alas!—so determined was her purpose against this foreign alliance—she has thrown herself into the stream, and perished! 'Tis done, and remediless! Let her sepulchre be on this river's bank, and be it called "the verdant tomb."† She is no more; and vain has been our enmity with the dynasty of Hān! The traitor Maouyenshow was the author of all this misery. (*To an officer*) Take Maouyenshow, and let him be delivered over to the Emperor for punishment. I will return to our former friendship with the dynasty of Hān. We will renew and long preserve the sentiments of relationship. The traitor disfigured the portrait to injure Chaoukeun—then deserted his sovereign, and stole over to me, whom he prevailed on to demand the lady in marriage. How little did I think that she would thus precipitate herself into the stream, and perish! In vain did my spirit melt ‡ at the sight of her! But if I detained this profligate and traitorous rebel, he would certainly prove to us a root of misfortune: it is better to deliver him for his reward to the Emperor of Hān, with whom I will renew and long retain our old feelings of relationship and amity.

(*Exeunt.*)

* This could not be properly rendered by "world," as the Chinese strictly speaking, have no idea of *another world*—only another state of existence in *this world*, or in the universe *as it now subsists*.

† Said to exist now, and to be green all round the year.

‡ Seauhoen, a common poetical expression.

ACT IV.

Enter EMPEROR, with an attendant.

EMP.—Since the princess was yielded to the Tartars, we have not held an audience. The lonely silence of night increases our melancholy! We take the picture of that fair-one and suspend it here, as some small solace to our griefs. (*To the attendant*) Keeper of the yellow gate, behold, the incense in yonder vase is burnt out: hasten then to add some more. “Though we cannot see her, we may at least retain this shadow; and, while life remains, betoken our regard.” But oppressed and weary, we would fain take a little repose. (*Lies down to sleep.*)

*The princess appears before him in a vision.**

PRIN.—Delivered over as a captive to appease the barbarians, they would have conveyed me to their northern country: but I took an occasion to elude them, and have escaped back. Is not this the Emperor, my sovereign? Sir, behold me again restored. *A Tartar soldier appears in the vision.*

SOLD.—While I chanced to sleep, the lady, our captive, has made her escape, and returned home. In eager pursuit of her, I have reached the imperial palace.—Is not this she?—(*Carries her off.*)

The Emperor starts from his sleep.

EMP.—We just saw the princess returned—but alas, how quickly has she vanished! “In bright day she answered not to our call—but when morning dawned on our troubled sleep, a vision presented her in this spot.” (*Hears the wild-fowl’s† cry*) “Hark, the passing fowl screamed twice or thrice!—Can it know there is one so desolate as I?” (*Cries repeated.*) “Perhaps worn out and weak, hungry and emaciated, they bewail at once the broad nets of the south and the tough bows of the north.” (*Cries repeated.*) The screams of those water-birds but increase our melancholy.

ATTEND.—Let your Majesty cease this sorrow, and have some regard to your sacred ‡ person.

* There is nothing in this more extravagant than the similar vision in the tragedy of Richard III.

† Yengo, a species of wild goose, (as well as the *Yuonyang*, *Anas nobilis*,) is the emblem in China of intersexual attachment and fidelity, being said never to pair again after the loss of its mate. An image of it is worshipped by newly-married couples. Inhabiting the northern regions during summer, these birds migrate in winter towards the southern extremes.

‡ *Loongte*, literally “Dragon person.” The Emperor’s throne is called the “Dragon seat.”

EMP.—My sorrows are beyond control. “Cease to upbraid this excess of feeling, since ye are all subject to the same. Yon doleful cry is not the note of the swallow on the carved rafters, nor the song of the variegated bird upon the blossoming tree. The princess has abandoned her home! Know ye in what place she grieves, listening like me to the screams of the wild bird?”

Enter PRESIDENT.

PRESID.—This day, after the close of the morning council, a foreign envoy appeared, bringing with him the fettered traitor Maouyenshow. He announces that the renegade, by deserting his allegiance, led to the breach of truce, and occasioned all these calamities. The princess is no more! and the K'han wishes for peace and friendship between the two nations. The envoy attends, with reverence, your imperial decision.

EMP.—Then strike off the traitor's head, and be it presented as an offering to the shade of the princess! Let a fit banquet be got ready for the envoy, preparatory to his return. (*Recites these verses.*)

“At the fall of the leaf, when the wild-fowl's cry was heard in the recesses
of the palace,
Sad dreams returned to our lonely pillow; we thought of her through the
night:
Her verdant tomb remains—but where shall we seek herself?
The perfidious painter's head shall atone for the beauty which he wronged.”

THE END.

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非朕躬有德皆賴衆文武扶持自先帝晏駕之后

宮女盡放出宮去了今後宮寂寞如何是好毛近

壽云

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女不分王侯宰相軍民人家但要十五以上二十

以下容貌端好盡選将来以充後宮有何不可駕

云
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個不怕我我又學得一個法兒只是教皇帝少見
儒臣多覩女色我這寵幸纔得牢固道尤未了聖

駕早

上正末粉漢元皇帝引內官宮女上

詩云嗣

傳十葉繼炎劉獨掌乾坤四百州邊塞久盟和議

策從今高枕已無憂某漢元帝是也俺祖高皇帝

舊布衣起豐沛滅秦屠項擣下這等基業傳到朕

躬已是十代自朕嗣位已來四海晏然八方寧靜

帝呂后以來每代必循故事以宗女歸俺番家宣
帝之世我衆兄弟爭立不定國勢稍弱今衆部落
立我為呼韓耶單于實是漢朝外甥我有甲士十
萬南移近塞稱藩漢室昨曾遣使進貢欲請公主
未知漢帝肯尋盟約否今日天高氣爽衆頭目每
向沙堤射獵一番多少是好正是番家無產業弓
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非別人毛延壽的便是見在漢朝駕下為中大夫

楔子

冲末粉番王引部落上

詩云

纏帳秋風迷宿草。穹

廬月夜聽悲笳。控弦百萬為君長。欒塞稱王屬漢家。某乃呼韓耶單于。是也。久居沙漠獨霸北方以射獵為生。攻伐為事。文王曾避俺東徙魏絳。曾怕俺講和。獯鬻獮狁逐代易名。單于可汗隨時稱號。當秦漢交兵之時。中原有事。俺國強盛。有控弦甲士百萬。俺祖公公冒頓單于圍漢高帝于白登。七日用婁敬之謀。兩國講和。以公主嫁俺國。中至惠。



